

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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November 30, 2012

**TO:** Design Review Board Members

**FROM:** Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)  
Ellen Miramontes, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov)

**SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of November 5, 2012 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting**

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** The Design Review Board's Chair, John Kriken, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. Other Design Review Board members in attendance included Karen Alschuler, Cheryl Barton, Tom Leader, Stefan Pellegrini and Gary Strang. Board Vice Chair Steve Thompson was not able to attend due to an accident although shared his feedback on the projects by email comments which were distributed to Board members at the meeting's start BCDC staff in attendance included Brad McCrea, Bob Batha, Erik Buehmann, Tim Eichenberg and Ellen Miramontes.

2. **Pete's Harbor Residential Community, City of Redwood City, San Mateo County. (First Pre-Application Review)** The Board conducted its first review of a proposal to construct a residential development, including eleven residential buildings, a clubhouse, a parking garage, and parking on an approximately 13.25-acre site, located at One Uccelli Boulevard, in the City of Redwood City, San Mateo County. The proposal includes new waterfront public access across an approximately 70,666-square-foot area, and the installation of a San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail site. The public access activities proposed within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction would include a 1,260-foot-long trail with landscaping, a playground, a bocce ball court, a gazebo, seating areas, bike racks, and overlooks.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Erik Buehmann introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report. Mr. Buehmann also indicated for the Board the boundaries of the Commission's jurisdiction on an enlarged site plan.

b. **Project Presentation.** Paul Powers with RWC Harbor Communities LLC briefly reviewed the project location, the various leases on the property including two with the State Lands Commission, the current site conditions, connections to existing and future sections of the Bay Trail, and the status of the local approval process. Brian Fletcher with Callander Associates then provided a power point presentation of the proposed project design. He specifically described the various public access amenities including the shoreline path, overlooks, water trail improvements, bocce court, play area, public parking, plant palette, site furniture and the destination area location at the northern point of the site. Mr. Powers additionally stated that they had held one meeting with the State Lands Commission to discuss the water trail improvements but these proposed improvements had not yet received approval by the State Lands Commission. Joe Wilson also with RWC Harbor Communities LLC then briefly described the proposed style of architecture as "coastal seaside architecture" which they had been directed by the City of Redwood City to emulate.



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**DRB MINUTES**  
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c. **Reviewer Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Cheryl Barton asked for further information on the history of the site. Mr. Powers explained that the marina was founded by Pete Uccelli 60 years ago. He further explained that in the 1980's there had been a dispute regarding what was private and what was public land and that this dispute resulted in the two State Lands Commission leases that exist at the marina today.

(2) John Kriken asked about the nature of the southern boundary of the property. Mr. Fletcher shared some of the existing photos and aerials depicting this area. The neighboring property to the south is a gated condominium community called "The Villas" which was developed approximately 15 years ago.

(3) Karen Alschuler asked whether there was anything in the proposed design that relate to the greater surrounding landscape. Mr. Fletcher explained that the project would employ the use of Bay-friendly plant material in order to blend with the natural environment and also that the entrance monument and the art sculpture proposed for the northern point would be designed to hark back to the artsy qualities of the site today.

(4) Ms. Alschuler asked how the public is intended to move through the area shown in "Site Enlargement A" on Exhibit H. Mr. Fletcher explained that all of this area is proposed for public use and he traced on the plan how one would walk or bike through the area.

(5) Mr. Kriken commented that in viewing the perspective rendering, which depicts the bocce court and shoreline path in Exhibit M, it is not clear that the public can move freely beneath and past the gazebo area. Matthew Gruber with Callander Associates responded that similarly colored and textured pavements would be used throughout the public access areas so that the public would be drawn throughout the site.

(6) Ms. Alschuler asked where the seven BCDC public access parking spaces would be located. The proposed location was pointed out adjacent to the water trail area, bocce court and play area.

(7) Ms. Barton asked why the palm trees were proposed on the waterside of the shoreline path. Mr. Fletcher explained that there are many palms on the site today and that these existing palms would be relocated in order to reference the previous site character.

(8) Gary Strang asked for more information on how the proposed architecture functions at the ground level and also how site circulation would occur. Mr. Powers explained that the ten 3-story buildings would have tuck-under parking at the ground level and additionally there would be 125 surface parking spaces, seven of which would be dedicated as BCDC public parking.

(9) Tom Leader asked how the public would proceed once arriving at the northern point of the project. Mr. Powers explained that the public would be free to continue along the shoreline throughout the entire project site since no gates are proposed and stated that the three view corridors will further serve to encourage public invitation.

d. **Public Comment.** The following public comments were made:

(1) Ann Buell who is with the State Coastal Conservancy and serves as project manager for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail shared a few comments. Ms. Buell is very interested in this site serving as a water trail site. She understands that there are many details yet to be figured out and encourages the project sponsors to carefully think through all aspects of the design. She specifically pointed out the potential for boat storage since some water trail users may want to arrive at the site by bike or foot given the limited amount of vehicular parking.

(2) Lee Huo with the San Francisco Bay Trail Project provided a brief overview of the Bay Trail for the benefit of the new Board members. He then stated that the Bay Trail is generally supportive of the project and believes the proposed shoreline path could potentially serve as Bay Trail “spur” in the future. He then relayed three specific comments: it is very important that there be smooth and continuous connections between all of the various trail segments in this area and that the widths and configurations of the trails not vary too greatly in order to avoid confusion for trail users; Bay Trail likes the openness of the plaza areas but believes that it is important there be a clear delineation for trail users so that pedestrians and bicyclists moving through these areas are not required to negotiate their way through other user groups; and lastly, it would be difficult for bicyclists to make the 90-degree turn required beneath the gazebo area so this area should be redesigned.

(3) Allison Madden is currently a tenant at Pete’s Harbor. She explained that for 60 years the public has enjoyed coming to this site for recreational boating, the boatyard and simply to enjoy the views. She further stated that the residents of Redwood City view Pete’s Harbor as a historical landmark.

(4) Leslie Webster is currently a resident at Pete’s Harbor. She stated that Redwood City is primarily a car-driving community. She stated that in other areas where BCDC public access parking has been provided, it is used everyday by nearby residents or office tenants rather than the public at large. She also noted that for 60 years the public has enjoyed coming to this site to go to the restaurant and enjoy the views.

(5) James Beeby, a current tenant at Pete’s Harbor, discussed the potential for contamination on the site given its origin as a landfill. He shared a handout with the Board, which discussed the site history, provided visual observations and raised the potential for environmental contamination to occur upon construction, which will include pile driving into the subgrade.

(6) Brenda Hattery and her husband are recreational boating “cruisers” and have been docked at Pete’s Harbor for the past several months. Ms. Hattery shared a power point presentation with the Board describing the existing uses and conditions of the property in detail. In particular, she described the restaurant, the marina, the RV park, the large parking areas, the manner in which people enjoy the docks and walking along the shoreline in order to enjoy viewing the Slough and the Bay beyond.

**e. Board Discussion**

(1) Mr. Kriken asked whether the Bay Trail had any specific standards for “spur” sections of the trail to which Mr. Huo said no.

(2) Ms. Alschuler asked what attraction there would be for the public to visit this shoreline. Mr. Powers responded that they would come to enjoy the overlooks, bocce court, play area, gazebo and shoreline paths.

(3) Ms. Barton asked how one would be able to directly access the water besides the docks since the shoreline is comprised of riprap. She encouraged the project applicants to pull the shoreline towards the residential zone in some areas in order to gain direct access to the water by means of a more natural shoreline edge condition. She also stated that the plant palette should blend very closely with the surrounding natural landscape.

(4) Mr. Kriken stated that the three view corridors were appropriately placed although the proposed trees may “squeeze” their openness and utility. Mr. Strang noted that three parking spaces were placed at the northern end of the far eastern view corridor, which would block views and be undesirable.

(5) Mr. Kriken noted that the design and amenities of the proposed overlooks appeared “awkward” and should be reconsidered. He further stated that access should be simplified at these specific nodes and a set of common materials should be used for the public areas. He also noted that the design of the bocce court and gazebo should be carefully redesigned.

(6) Mr. Leader stated there should be a stronger distinction between the private residential zones and the public access areas and that the shoreline path should stand out more clearly as “a yellow brick road” and provide a clear, continuous thread along the shoreline. Ms. Barton agreed that there should be clear visual cues between the public and residential areas.

(7) Ms. Alschuler stated that there were many positive elements to the project including the various activities placed within the shoreline band. She also applauded the applicants for providing many connections to the public access areas. She noted that the water trail improvements will provide a “fantastic access point” and agreed with the proposed idea that boat storage be provided. She also stated that the overall design should be carefully reconsidered for bicycle use.

(8) Mr. Strang stated that the entry point should be further simplified to create a smoother entry into the project that is legible and welcoming to the public. He further noted that the parking lot should be carefully considered in terms of stormwater permeability and design quality given its predominance on the site.

(9) Mr. Pellegrini suggested the applicants consider elevating the buildings in order to provide a clearer distinction between public and private space since there appears to be ambiguity between these areas as designed. Mr. Wilson noted that an elevation change would raise issues in maintaining accessibility for persons with disabilities. Mr. Strang noted that if one were to attempt to separate the public and private spaces too greatly, the design of each of these spaces would lose out and it may be better to maintain a “sense of graciousness” as designed.

f. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board concluded its review with the following comments:

(1) The three parking spaces at the northern end of the eastern view corridor should be removed. The Board cautioned that any use of trees within the three view corridors must be carefully planned to avoid obstructing the view corridor.

(2) There should be a stronger definition between the public access areas and the residential areas and this should be achieved through the use of common materials in each of these areas.

(3) The shoreline path route should be made more clear and direct. In addition, bicycle usage of the trail should be carefully considered and designed for throughout the site.

(4) The diversity of uses provided within the public access areas is pleasing and, in particular, the Board believes that the water trail site will be successful and would like to see further detailed development of this aspect.

(5) The circular seating areas appear “contrived” and should be simplified and redesigned.

(6) The main entry to the public access area should be simplified and made more direct and obvious.

(7) The applicant should explore providing direct physical access to the water by adjusting the edge of the shoreline and providing a beach area if possible.

(8) The plant palette should be rethought in order for the landscape “to be more of the place.” In addition, the Board suggested that the palms be pulled back from the shoreline and placed closer to the residential structures.

(9) The Board stated that the project should return for further Board review.

g. **Applicant Response.** Paul Powers stated that the project sponsors are very amenable to providing a strong sense of “public invitation.” He specifically noted that a grade separation for the residential uses would neither benefit the public space nor the private areas. He stated they would address the 90-degree turns for bicycle users. While acknowledging that people do have a desire to get to the water, he noted that they had been very sensitive to stay out of any areas that would require approval by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Brian Fletcher stated that they intended for the design to feel very open and welcoming and they had purposely chosen to provide the same level of material quality between the public and private areas. He further noted that they would be developing more specific information regarding the water trail and carefully considering how to create an access point accessible for persons with disabilities.

3. **Phoenix Commons Senior Co-Housing Development, City of Oakland, Alameda County. (First Pre-Application Review).** The Board next reviewed a proposal to construct a 41-unit senior co-housing development located along the Oakland Estuary at 940 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the City of Oakland, Alameda County. The public access improvements would include a new 25 to 33-foot-wide public access promenade paralleling the shoreline and the development of a public access deck over the estuary.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Erik Buehmann introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report.

b. **Project Presentation.** Linda Herman introduced the project and described the nature of the proposed senior co-housing project as “living in an intentional community.” She further explained that they had recently obtained a lease for the deck area from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and they planned to gate this area at night for safety and liability reasons. Jeff Zimmerman, the project architect, then provided a power point presentation. He described the existing site conditions, the proposed public promenade and deck, the private patio adjacent to the building, and the proposed improvements at the terminus of 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

c. **Reviewer Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Ms. Alschuler asked the architect to describe the design of the proposed railings. Mr. Zimmerman explained that the railings would be 42 inches tall and have a wooden top rail with steel posts and cross members beneath.

(2) Mr. Strang asked where the proposed seating was located and, also, how the deck area would be used. Mr. Zimmerman indicated the location of the three proposed benches and explained that the deck was envisioned as an area to pause and enjoy the waterfront. Ms. Herman further explained that the private patio next to the building would have seating as well.

(3) Mr. Kriken asked whether the stairway located on the southeast corner of the building would be gated and Mr. Zimmerman answered yes.

(4) Mr. Leader asked how emergency vehicles would move through the area. Mr. Zimmerman explained that the bollards would be removable so that emergency vehicles could access the public promenade if needed, although fire engines would not need to access the promenade since fires at this property are fought through the use of fireboats as occurred in the 2010 fire of the previous restaurant on the site.

(5) Mr. Leader asked whether the bollards proposed on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue could be moved northwards in order to create a larger car-free zone. Mr. Zimmerman explained that service loading would need to be accommodated on this side of the building.

(6) Ms. Barton asked what the arc-shaped item shown in the water was. The applicants explained that this shape represented the bumpers in the water that are in place to protect the bridge.

(7) Mr. Kriken inquired about access to the boat dock depicted adjacent to the deck area. Mr. Zimmerman explained that this dock area would be for private use and they were hoping to install some type of vertical lift and transfer system in order to accommodate persons with disabilities.

d. **Public Comment.** The following public comments were made:

(1) Cynthia Elliot has lived in the neighborhood for 12 years. She shared that she is “on the public shore approximately 2-3 times per day” and serves as the “eyes and ears of the neighborhood.” She stated that the neighbors are supportive of the proposed development and the public access associated with it.

(2) Lee Huo with the San Francisco Bay Trail Project stated that he was pleased to see the Bay Trail incorporated into the project although the Bay Trail has some significant concerns with the current proposal. He expressed concern that the railing between the promenade and the deck would cause the deck area to feel private. He did not believe that the dangers in the neighborhood were so great as to cause the need for the area to be gated at night. He was also concerned about the use of wooden decking as he had observed wide gaps (close to the size of a quarter coin as shown in a photo) on the neighboring property to the east, which could pose a safety concern and also may not be durable over time. He further explained that Bay Trail had been working with the City of Oakland for many years to envision and create shoreline connections reaching from Jack London Square to Martin Luther King Shoreline Park. One aspect of these plans is to provide a connection beneath the Park Street Bridge on this northern side of the estuary and, as such, he requested that a special condition be placed in the permit to require the project accommodate this future connection wherever it is determined best to occur. He also asked that the project sponsor move the bollards proposed at the foot of 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue further to the north in order to increase the protected area for pedestrians and bicyclists.

(3) Sandy Threlfall with Oakland’s Waterfront Action shared that she supported all of the comments made by Mr. Huo. She specifically stated that she did not see the need for fencing between the promenade and the deck area in order to achieve greater safety and she felt, in fact, that it would have a detrimental affect by causing the deck “to read as private” by placing these “mini-walls around the public access areas.”

e. **Board Discussion**

(1) Mr. Strang noted that he believed it would make sense to continue the row of trees from the neighboring property. He further noted that the particular type of palms specified (*Syagrus romanoffiana* / Queen Palm) tend to show signs of stress in the Bay Area and generally do not perform well in the area.

(2) Mr. Leader stated that it is hard to ascertain from the design what is private space and what is public space. He believes it would be helpful for there to be some sort of element to provide stronger definition between the private patio and the public promenade.

(3) Mr. Kriken noted that in “socially stressed” areas it is necessary to place interventions for public safety that then get removed over time as they are no longer needed. He further suggested that perhaps the railing adjacent to the private patio be changed to planters with seating in order to provide a stronger sense of separation along this edge. Additionally, he noted that he likes the “nautical feeling” of the railing design.

(4) Ms. Barton agreed it made sense to continue the trees west across the front of the property and in alignment with the neighboring trees. Additionally, she noted that she supports the use of a wooden boardwalk for a portion of the promenade as designed.

(5) Mr. Pellegrini expressed concern regarding the 42-inch-high railing between the promenade and the deck as he did not believe “it would do much to keep people out.” He also noted that the promenade at the western end where it connects to 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue should widen rather than narrow as the design currently shows. He otherwise felt that the project design was commendable.

(6) Mr. Strang further agreed that he was not clear on what the risk to the public there would be by allowing the deck to be ungated.

(7) Mr. Kriken agreed that the railing between the promenade and deck would serve as a “visual symbol” and “would not keep anyone out physically.”

(8) Mr. Leader suggested that there be a stronger “garden aspect” surrounding the private patio in order to divide this space from the public space.

e. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board concluded its review with the following comments:

(1) The Board stated that the placement of the palms was a positive gesture in order to continue the line of trees from the eastern neighboring property (although suggested reconsideration of particular species of palms proposed). They also felt the trees proposed at the bridge abutment would provide a positive division.

(2) The Board stated that there should be a greater perception of separation between the private patio and public promenade. They specifically described that this edge should be “thickened” and that seating could be added as well.

(3) The Board agreed with the use of wooden decking for a portion of the promenade as proposed.

(4) The Board stated that they could accept the proposed railing between the promenade and the deck area. They specifically indicated that additional, obvious public access amenities should be considered for the deck area.

(5) The Board stated that the applicant should agree to receive and plan for a future connection to the Bay Trail from underneath the Park Street Bridge when this occurs in the future.

4. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN MIRAMONTES  
Bay Design Analyst

Approved, with no corrections, at the  
Design Review Board Meeting of December 10, 2012.